{ See Note at end. }

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JESUS.

BY JENKIN LLOYD JONES.

THE SECRET OF JESUS' POWER.

Jesus has been a name of unmeasured influence, and the Christianity founded upon this name has been a sublime factor in the history of the race. Whence comes the power of this Judean peasant? What constitutes the vitality of this name?

These can scarcely be found in the words he uttered alone, for the candid scholar is now able to match the burning words that Jesus uttered with kindred words found in the prophetic wealth of Jewry, Greece, Persia, India and China. He knows that Moses and Isaiah, Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius, Socrates and Plato brought out of the deep places of God nuggets of the same gold that Jesus washed,—evidence that the Infinite Father sets all His children at work in the same mine and that they who dig deep enough and wash with sufficient care, find in their pan the same gold-dust of eternal truth. Says Max Müller; "There is no religion, or if there is I do not know it, which does not say—do good—avoid evil. * * * Man was never, in any nation, forsaken of God." Illustrations of this truth are now available to every thoughtful reader. Buddha said: "Let a man overcome anger with love, evil by good, the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth." Confucius, who in distant China heard before the Judean shepherds the evangel of peace says: "My doctrine is easy to understand. It consists in having the heart right and in loving one's neighbor as one's self. One word stands for the rule of life and that is *reciprocity*,—what you do not like when done to yourself, do not that to others." Says Laou-tsze: "Recompense enmity by doing good." Says the old Brahmin Bible: "Let one gently reply to them who curse him," and the Persian sage said that "to vex a man with

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words is sin." The Buddhist Bible has its commands against killing, stealing, adultery, lying and another command omitted both from Jewish and from Christian codes, and sadly needed: "Thou shalt not intoxicate thyself."

An exaggerated estimate of the originality of Jesus's thoughts has been obtained from the abruptness with which the New Testament begins, and the consequent black abyss which the popular mind has conceived as representing the intervening centuries between the last chapter of Malachi and the first chapter of Matthew. Jesus came not in the meagreness but "the *fullness* of time," to use the apt phrase of the Bible. At no previous period in the history of his people was there such intellectual activity, such hopeful inquiry, as at the time into which Jesus was born. He opened his eyes and heart amidst a people aglow with the ferment of new thought and the restless agitation of patriotic expectation, The land of Judea at the time of his birth was on the picket line of the new order of things; the air was full of battle noises; Asia the old was muttering at Europe the new, it was a time when men's ideas were compelled to broaden. The Talmudic or Rabbinical writings which were forming at this time and might be called the New Testament of the Jewish Bible, abound with material akin to that which forms the burden of the Gospels, clearly showing that Jesus was emphatically a man of his time as well as for his time. Says the lamented Emanuel Deutsch, than whom no one has spoken in English with more authority concerning the Talmud:

"There are striking parallels of dogma and parable, of allegory and proverb exhibited by the Gospel and Talmudic writings. There are many more vital points of contact between the New Testament and the Talmud than divines seem fully to realize. The terms 'Redemption,' 'Baptism,' 'Grace,' 'Faith,' 'Salvation,' 'Regeneration,' 'Son of Man,' 'Son of God,' 'Kingdom of Heaven,' were not, as we are apt to think, invented by Christianity, but were household words of Talmudical Judaism. No less loud and bitter in the Talmud are the protests against 'lip-serving,' against 'making the law a burden to the people,' against 'laws that hang on hairs,' against 'Priest and Pharisees.'"*

But were the sayings of Jesus absolutely unique, they would yet be inadequate to account for his power. The abstract principles they represent could not have given rise to that potent stream we call Christianity. Tabulate the words of Jesus, placing here his moral precepts, here his theological statements, and there his religious prophesies and promises, leaving out if you can, the man, the citizen of Nazareth, the son of Mary and Joseph, admitting no hint of his humane actions, leaving no trace of the warm blood, the noble enthusiasm of humanity that the author of "*Ecce Homo*" speaks of, and what have we left? We have the ashes in the chemist's crucible, the rose as it comes from the press, its fragrance all expressed, its living beauty gone. We have a bouquet of wilted flowers; we have the stuff out of which the juiceless dogmas of the church have been made; we have the timber out of which are built the narrow gangways of the creeds, across which a small fragment of the race pass on their way into heaven. Surely these do not represent the power of him whom the centuries unite in calling Savior, to whom the majority of Christians to-day irreverently ascribe the attributes of Deity, and whom they worship as Almighty God.

Nor can I think that this power is to be found in his alleged wonder-workings. The time was when a miracle did go to prove a doctrine, but now the doctrine has hard work to prove the miracle. Men no longer believe in Jesus because of the miracle, but some still believe in the miracle because of Jesus. Accepting for the time being as true this marvel-garment with which an admiring humanity is ever prone to clothe its noblest and

*Literary Remains. pp. 26-7.

highest, it still is wanting in age-moulding and life-impelling power to-day. Science has rendered tame those Judean surprises by its greater wonders of trained steel fingers, talking and singing iron cylinders, voices heard across the continent, harnessed steam and domesticated lightning. A comparative study discloses the damaging fact that every ancient teacher of religion comes to us to-day with his miracle credentials, miracles as startling as those ascribed to Jesus and vouched for by witnesses as authentic. Zoroaster and Confucius are reputed fatherless. Buddha was born of a virgin and Socrates' birth called forth a special recognition from the powers above. In other religions the dead were raised up, the hungry fed, hidden things discerned by supernatural power. But it is not my purpose to discuss the credibility of miracles, but to assert that the marvels of the New Testament are an inadequate explanation of that large power which Jesus represents.

Where then shall we look for the essential elements of this power, the real force that has furrowed so deep the history of nineteen centuries? We must seek them in his life, the record of which, as has been said, must be read between the lines of the Gospel pages, in the tender eye that looked pitifully down upon wayward Jerusalem, in that gentle heart, too loving to censure, which compelled the words,—"Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." The potent thing was that sublime soul which could not be silenced by bigotry, aristocracy or priest-craft. It triumphed grandly even in the defeat on Calvary, and the cross that mangled the body and silenced the tongue, gave to this soul a thousand tongues; it changed the instrument of torture into a symbol of hope. Even though the broken records of that life were more meagre than they are—and only careful students realize their meagerness; though the difficulties of the Gospel studies were greater than we now find them,—and how few there are who are both willing and competent to state them,—there would still flow a light from that life that poured out the wealth of its prophetic soul for the lone woman at the Sychar well. That enthusiasm that believed in the coming hour when God, should be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and saw Gerizim and Jerusalem both fading into insignificance as compared to the living soul, is the contagious thing. So long as men can feel a single throb of that heart, pulsing with humane instincts, as it shamed the reputable selfishness and narrowness of the lawyer with the story of the benevolent Samaritan, will they continue devoutly to honor the name of Jesus. The potent things in the Gospel story are these life touches: "Jesus wept," "He looked on Peter," "He went about doing good." He, the solitary, the suspected, the misunderstood, but the ever loyal, faithful to his highest impulses, undaunted in danger, who in that moment of supreme trial, when it seemed as if the very God of the universe was about to forsake him, asked no truce, took nothing back, and died as he lived, a foe to tyranny and a rebuke to bigotry,—this man attracts souls as the sun does its planets, by virtue of his magnitude. The noble goodness of Jesus is the source of his light; his manliness is the divine part of him; his is the highest greatness—a loving heart. This excellency which is kindness, is too subtile for our analysis; it is the tender mystery of God that is "a quickening flame within."

To realize the true divineness of this life we must become profoundly persuaded of its naturalness—its humanity. In confessing its sanctity we do but emphasize its universality. This heavenly connection is not confined to the land of Judea or the time of Herod. The light of God is not limited to that life whose birthday we celebrate at Christmas time. Life everywhere is from God, and it is always the light of men. The prophet is ever greater than his word. Show me a State, church or home that depends

upon formal regulation, outward law or written rule for its dicipline, and I will show you a State, church or home that is void of power, dark, a lighthouse without a lamp. This is the mistake of the creed-makers; they place exclusive power in the formula instead of the life. When the theologians make of Jesus a peculiar and an unnatural factor in the human history, they dismember the family of God, mar the unity of man, rend the seamless robe of Jesus. No race or age can claim monopoly of that Christly life that is light, and its winsome power follows no irregular line of ecclesiastical succession; it does not wait for wrangling councils to determine on which brow it shall next rest, and into what heart it shall next shine for the healing and helping of men. Not the word but the life is powerful. In the life the word itself becomes living; then, and not till then does it possess a saving grace. We seek the power of Sakya-muni, the light of Asia, the Buddha, the name which carries inspiration and warmth to more souls than does any other name lisped by man. Nearly one-third of those who people the earth to-day pronounce his name as that of the Incarnate God, and worship him as their Savior. Seeking the secret of his power we find it when we learn that this man refused the luxury of a palace, turned aside from the honors of royalty, tore from his heart the sweet benediction of domestic love, and with a mendicant's garb in a hermit's cave sought that Truth which would destroy the evils of the world. This life has been the light of men.

Again we see the early Christian church canonizing Socrates, a Greek pagan, as a saint. We find Dean Stanley, representative of an exclusive church, justifying the act, and placing him among the rarest of Christian worthies. This is all explained in the story of his manliness. Rather than swerve a hair's breadth from the line of conscience or turn his back for a moment on truth, he was willing with steady hand to drain the deadly hemlock to its dregs, and lie down to his last sleep as quietly as a child nestles into its mother's arms. This is a ray of electric light that penetrates the darkness of twenty-four centuries and illuminates the whole mystery. Not what Socrates said, nor yet what Socrates did, but what Socrates was, gives to him his perennial power. "The life is the light of men."

This truth may be proven from the other side and from the lower walks of life. Solomon, for all his famed wisdom and glory, has long since sunk into insignificance, and is now scarcely more than a name in in human history. While the unlettered and unnamed Bethany woman, who did "what she could," is a light growing brighter with the centuries. Solomon's life was dimmed by wickedness, the woman's illuminated by love. The Pharisee who "cast much" into the contribution box is remembered only to his discredit, while the widow who gave the "two mites that make a farthing," is tenderly enshrined in the heart of Christendom. He gave out of his purse, she out of her living. Potency is in the life. Daniel Webster, with his massive brain and eagle eye, mighty in his endowments, rich in the learning of the schools and proud in the honors of his country, is already a dead man; his power has passed. While Abraham Lincoln, the uncouth pioneer, tutored by the oar and the ax, the log cabin with its pitch pine fire his only college hall, without learning or outward refinement, is a growing light, that outreaches his nation and is illuminating the continents. That which was back of Webster's attainments and which establishes the final test, the life, was not shaped to the divine plan. Hence his is a flickering light, while the soul of Abraham Lincoln was ever sensitive to the eternal verities; true to the divine instincts; and when he spoke, it was music in which angels might have delighted.

The saving power of Jesus is exemplified by every fireside and is verified

in every human experience. The soul recognizes more than one hero and every heart honors more than one Saviour, but in every such anointing, in all such reverence, rank, culture, wealth and their attendant decorations fall off as trinkets. The life alone commands the final honors. We want the man unvarnished and without external props, creeds or credentials. He helps us most in whom we discover the deepest consecration to duty, the broadest human love, the most of human conscience. It is in the presence of such souls that the spirit kneels, and men and women come away from such shrines stronger and purer. The power of Jesus will never be adequately understood or justly appreciated until it is fully recognized as akin to the Christly illumination that streams from other souls; that his mantle is earth-woven with a divine warp and human woof. We shall be in the way of understanding Jesus when we understand that the baptism of the holy spirit is given to all hands that do good, all eyes that weep in sympathy with the sorrowing, all hearts that beat with love for mankind. This is the true apostolic succession that connects the ages with Jesus and God. From great-heart to great-heart the divine commissions have flashed down the centuries with sublime contempt for priestly orders or church assumptions. From nobleness to nobleness flashes the saving spirit. Truth becomes true when it becomes alive, and this constitutes the prophetic order that is indifferent to the wrangling of councils, that makes bishop hats empty, cardinal gowns worthless, and laughs at creedal distinctions. To this prophetic order, Jesus belongs. The life is the light of men.

It is not strange that Jesus has been deified, torn from the humanity he so well served and so grandly exemplified, for men have ever been prone to worship embodied power. It is kissing the lantern in gratitude for the light it sheds. Christendom to-day offers more prayers to the man Jesus than to the Father whom Jesus worshipped. So far as this is the genuine worship of the heart and not the stiff obeisance to an ecclesiastical tradition, to an outgrown dogma, it is pardonable, for it is the infantile worship a child offers an elder brother, not yet realizing the glory of the Father who is the source of both.

This view of Jesus gives him a solid place in the universe of law; he is creature, not creator; his power is as natural as the trade winds that bear tropic odors of foreign spices to our shores. He is as natural as the Nile whose majestic waters flow from terrestrial springs, fertilize a kingdom and there lose themselves in the sea. Jesus is a man, and not a God. He is a legitimate Jew, rising superior to the limitations of race and time, deserving those descriptive words found in the Gospel pages which the adoring centuries have changed into titles of honor and renown. "Son of Man?" Aye, verily the most human of all humanity. "Son of God?" Certainly a divine child, for the spirit of the All-Father that claims every child born of woman as its own, moved in the heart of this son of Mary and Joseph. "The Bread of Life?" Yes, indeed, and the "Living Water" also, for there is nourishment in his words and refreshment in his works. "The Vine?" Yes, of which the Father is the Husbandman. "Deliverer," "Shepherd," "The Way," "The Truth," "The Life." Yes, all these. Their meaning is made plain and impressive by the most common experience of every one who tries to do right and to grow better. But he helps deliver from real, not fancied ills. He shepherds by leading, not by driving, the truer forces of life. The way is not the destination nor is there any help in substitution. I hear the divine assumption, "I and my Father are one," but I hear also the refrain—"that they may all be one, even as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us." Were not such methods flippant and unworthy the name of argument, I might

go on multiplying Bible texts in support of the manly character of Jesus, but such texts torn from their surroundings are at best but a string of beads, strung upon the slender thread of one's own speech; they are never links in a chain that take organic hold of one another. To deny the exclusively human character of Jesus, we must go outside the Bible to find phraseology. "God, the Son," "Trinity," and "Infinite Vicarious Substitute," are terms neglected by the Bible as they are denied by reason. I find evidence in his own words, of the modesty that becomes the reverent soul. His favorite term for himself is the "Son of Man," which he uses some sixty times. Seldom does he appropriate to Himself the more pretentious, but still legitimate phrase, "Son of God," occurring in the Gospels some twenty-four times. The writers put it into his mouth I believe, not more than four times.

In thus placing this great teacher solidly into human nature, we do but place him where he and his earliest admirers and followers were wont to place him. Jesus himself confesses his humanity over and over again. "But now ye seek to kill me, a *man* that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God." Why callest thou me good—there is none good save God the Father. "I can of mine own self do nothing." "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of *Man* hath not where to lay his head." "Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." To those who were near to him and beset with his every-day dignity, he seemed a very man. "After me cometh a *man* who is preferred before me, says John." "Come see a *man* who told me all things that ever I did, said the Samaritan woman." "The blind man said a *man* that is called Jesus, made clay." "Behold the *man*, says Pontius Pilate." "Truly, this *man* was the Son of God, says the Centurion." "Jesus of Nazareth, a *man* approved among you, was the word at Pentecost." "Through this *man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin, said Paul at Antioch." "By that *man* whom he hath ordained," was his word at Athens. "The *man* Christ Jesus" was his word to Timothy, and so we might go on down through the first and second centuries and the thought of his humanity is uppermost until out of a theological, not a moral or religious necessity, he was deified as a concession to the philosophy of the times and a gratification to the superstitious and polytheistic demands of a half pagan constituency.

But you ask, "is it not shocking to reduce Jesus the Saviour, to a mere man?" "Mere man!" This is, as Emerson said concerning "mere morality," as if one would say, "Poor God, and no one to help him." Who dares put a limit to the possibilities of that race that reaches from the rag picker to Newton, from the Hottentot to Socrates, from Judas to Jesus.

> "Draw, if thou canst, the mystic line
> Severing rightly His from thine,
> Which is human, which divine."

"Mere man?" Say also mere Niagara! Mere Mississippi! Mere Saturn, engirdled with mere rings! Mere Universe! And then say if you please, "mere man!" For his is the power that can measure, fathom, weigh, love, adore and worship all these "Mere man?" As well call the white roofed Andes mere mountains, or the giants of Mariposa mere trees. As soon could you degrade white-winged Michael by saying mere arc-angel as to make small the soul of the Judean peasant with the groundling's sneer of "mere man." Let us turn from the workshop of the creeds to the diviner prophet of letters and learn a better standard from the master poet.

"What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a God!"

JESUS THE HELPER.

This thought of Jesus, so different from the theological estimate placed upon him by the popular churches, necessitates a change of thought concerning salvation, with which theology so intimately connects the name of Jesus. It necessitates a salvation related to reason, not to creed; a salvation centered on life, not on death; one that suggests usefulness rather than ecstacy, a kindly concern for others rather than a selfish anxiety for one's own future. The sinner in his weakness, loneliness and terror, has been taught to look to Jesus for help. This is well, very well, if he can but realize what he may and may not expect from this quarter.

Jesus did not when on earth, nor does he now, grant any release from the perplexing questions of the intellectual life. He puts to sleep no faculty of the mind. At the peril of their quiet he invited his disciples to follow him unto the broader realms of thought where mystery and newness would meet them on every hand. With telling blows he sought to break the fetters of intellectual complacency. He offers no substitute for reason, no furlough from the duty of thinking. "Why of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" "Study the signs of the times." "Blessed are hunger and thirst" in this direction, said Jesus. There is no rest in credulity. Blind acceptance of the utterances of Jesus himself brings no peace that is desirable. While mind is finite and truth is infinite, there can be no resting place for the intellect of man. Do you doubt this? Ask him who signed away his responsibility to think for himself when he signed the creed, and see how much peace he has found in his intellectual life. Ask monk and nun who have tried to smother a questioning mind under the mantle of the church, how much peace they have found. Jesus first appears in the narrative as a questioner, and they who in his name are intellectually complacent or stolid, sadly miss his spirit.

Neither does Jesus give any release from the problems of duty. The salvation to which he contributes increases the moral conflict; if Jesus was anything he was a warrior, a knight-militant in the cause of right. The path from Jordan to Calvary is strown with battle wrecks. He who was suspected by his people, deserted and cheated by his nearest followers, found no easy place in society, and certainly promised none to those who were to come after him. "I come not to bring peace but a sword." Theologically he was branded as a heretic. Politically he was regarded as a traitor. Socially he was avoided as a disorganizer. Whatsoever of salvation he had to offer must be won on the battle-fields of life. Its emblems are the red banners of persecution, the thorny crown of derision, the cross of defeat and death. There is no peace as there is no salvation worthy the name, while superstition remains to forge her fetters, while fraud is abroad to destroy the poise of society; while any image of the Most High remains enslaved by passion within or power without; while intemperance stalks like a black plague through the land, blighting our fairest and best; while a single conscience is muzzled or a solitary intellect darkened. There can be no salvation after the manner of Jesus save that won on the military roads of the Almighty, the guide posts of which are built of the enduring marble of principle, mounted upon which is the index finger of God himself, which always says—Keep to the Right! Keep to the Right!! There can be no mistake here, for did he not say—"Blessed are ye when men shall *revile* you and *persecute* you and shall say all manner of evil against you for my sake." Be not deceived then by compromise. By no scheme of expediency can you gain that peace the soul hungers for.

I thought that the course of the pilgrim to Heaven

Was bright as the summer, and glad as the morn;
Thou showed'st me the path; it was dark and uneven,
All rugged with rock, and all tangled with thorn.

I dreamed of celestial rewards and renown;
I grasped at the triumph that blesses the brave;
I asked for the palm-branch, the robe, and the crown;
I asked,—and Thou showed'st me a cross and a grave.

I have already claimed that the power of Jesus is not traceable to any wonder-working gift peculiar to the Orient, found only in the antique world of Jewry; it follows that Jesus can give no preter-natural salvation. He offers no miraculous relief from the limitations and weaknesses of humanity. He who grew weary, hungry and thirsty; who wept, fainted and died, was every inch of him a man, and he cannot save his fellow-man from like limitations. It is possible by the earnestness of the revival hour to persuade a weary soul that heaven may be attained by a jump and salvation secured by a miracle; but such spiritual spasms seldom reform. They leave the individual and society in unrest. The churches are full of discord and jealousy, ignorance and selfishness, spite of the fact that their members claim to have found this miraculous renewal that abides for time and eternity.

If then He can not once and for all answer the besetting questions of the intellect; if he cannot relieve the soul from the strife and toil of the moral battle fields of life; if he cannot impute his salvation to others by any ghostly trick or sudden charm, how does he save? What is his relation to the salvation of men?

I see in him one of the many great forces by which God draws the soul towards the right; a force,—like all the forces of God,—easily felt, but hard to define; a force very real but difficult to analyze. To confess this difficulty is not to admit the vagueness of the force, for while the magnetism in the iron is an unsolved mystery, we may well admit the greater mystery,—the magnetic power of a great soul.

Jesus saves by the grandeur of his nature, the nobility of his soul, so powerfully felt whenever earnestly studied. He saves by the elevation he gives to the spirit that communes with his. Once I stood on the brow of Lookout mountain in Tennessee. Around me were the scars of war, the wreck of battle; beneath me were tented battalions, mounted cannon and stocked arsenals; but before and beyond me on every hand opened boundless space; north, east, south and west, valley called unto valley "as deep called unto deep," and the land like the boundless ocean receded in mighty billows. The eye could defy man-made lines and look into five different States of our Union; on the south-eastern horizon were to be seen the dim outlines of the blue hills of the Carolinas; from the north-east, like a ribbon of silver, the Tennessee threaded itself through its tortuous path; and to the north there was nothing to prevent the imagination from extending its line of vision beyond the pickets of armies; beyond the Mason and Dixon line of political strife. No Ohio River divided a north from a south, and I felt very near my Wisconsin home; more than that, the refulgent summer sun flooded all with a heavenly flame and it seemed as if the gates of mortality were flung wide open and I was looking into the celestial realms of eternity itself. The soul within was flooded with a light akin to that without. Forgotten were the lines of jealousy and hatred; silenced were all the battle noises, and all was peaceful. Oh, so peaceful! Such is the calm that greatness imparts to a sin-disturbed soul. When through the ages men whelmed in the storms of hatred and jealousy, battling with bigotry and passion, have climbed the mount of the Beatitudes, they have found the tempest quieted, the storm calmed, and from that lofty lookout the broken lines of life flow into a harmonious landscape; discord becomes harmony; trial becomes triumph, and the soul finds rest. Hearts looking unto Jesus in this fashion have found themselves staid and

strengthened, not in any sickly, sentimental or miraculous fashion, but according to one of the most obvious laws of nature. "A fig tree looking upon figs, becometh fruitful," says the Arab proverb. Or to state it in the more prosaic maxim of modern science,—"like produces like."

Again, Jesus saves by inspiring effort, giving work to idle hands and a motion to limp souls. Jesus gives the rest that comes with noble weariness; the rest which the restless horse finds in action. The calm of preöccupation is his to impart, the peace which our nation recently found in its conflict, the severity which Luther found, facing the Diet of Worms. A life that has taken in hand a good work is on the highway of salvation; which highway has been opened up for countless souls by the loving, glowing, triumphant life of Jesus. Hence his saving power in the world.

Rest is not quitting
The busy career,
'Tis the fitting of self
To its sphere.

'Tis the brook's motion,
Clear without strife,
Fleeing to Ocean
After its life.

There is still another way in which Jesus vitally helps in the salvation of men. The largeness of his sympathy, the tenderness of his heart, touches the lonely with a sense of fellowship, visits the orphan with a sense of fatherly care and motherly tenderness ever near. Independence, the boasted word of the nineteenth century, finds thoughtful limitations in the consciousness of God on the one hand and of fellow beings on the other. Human nature is so constituted that sooner or later it must yearn for a sense of fatherhood with the one, and of brotherhood with the other. The larger the soul the more points of contact does it offer to all other souls. So this great Nazarene has been a connecting link between man and man, a revealer of the divine light and life that seeks expression and recognition in every human soul. I remember in the battle of Champion Hills the brigade with which we were connected found itself separated in the hasty march from its companions in the division and was called upon to enter the line with strange troops, and under an unknown leader. The word of command was given to charge an unknown enemy in a position of his own selection; the line entered the woods, wavered, halted, and returned. "It is impossible; they are ten to our one," the men said. The line was re-formed, again the strange voice cried "Forward!" and unfamiliar bugles echoed the command. Another attempt is made. It ends in a retreat as before. There was "no use," they said. But just now there appears over the crest of the hill the familiar old German colonel from Missouri, peering as none other could over his spectacles, followed by the tattered banners of the second brigade. "Gif way to de left for my men," cried the old veteran, and trusty comrades filed in. The word of command is now given by a trusted voice. The men start with a bound, where before they wavered. The enemies' ranks are pierced, and the victorious line appears on the hill slope beyond. The battle goes on, the foe thickens, new columns are hurled against our troops, they stand firm and long; but at last hope gives way, and the line, bleeding and torn, falls back, a discouraged and disorganized mass. But yonder comes dashing the black charger, bearing the electric eye, benignant countenance and manly form of McPherson, the revered and beloved above all others. This is enough. There is no need of words now. The consciousness that he is on the field, and his eye upon them, is enough. The men turn and with one spontaneous effort move forward to win the memorable victory of that day.

So is it in the battle of life. The soul threatened, estranged, standing without the conscious fellowship of friend with friend, finds it very hard to hold its ground. Doubt, discouragement and dismay take possession of it and it will run anywhere rather than face the front

where danger is joined with duty. But when that same soul learns with Jesus that he is not alone, that he is surrounded by brothers who have struggled as he has struggled, that he is one of a line of comrades, who have met a common foe and have won common victories, when he realizes that he is standing shoulder to shoulder with the saints who have gone before, then he feels that he is, as Carlyle says, "a member of the sacred band of immortals, the celestial body guard of the empire of mankind." Then life is dauntless; danger is lost in duty; and fear is converted into courage.

But there are times when the enemy gathers so fast, the chances seem to be so small, weariness and discouragements become such burdens, that even a sense of brotherhood is inadequate. The whole human army seems to be in danger. The soul despairs of the whole line. Then it is that he who tastes with Jesus "the bread that others know not of," the living water that springs up into the eternal life, becomes conscious of the omnipotent leadership, the infinite love; and when the voice of the Eternal Goodness calls him to the charge, then duty is the supreme word; and no Golgotha terrors, not death nor hell itself, can turn him aside.

Having thus recognized Jesus as one of humanity's "captains of salvation," how shall we give him the homage that is his due? Shall we in token of our respect and gratitude vote him very God, at some denominational conference, appoint delegates to a convention to legislate a theological dogma that will state that the Son and Father are one and of equal age, and that though one is begotten by the other, both are uncreated. And that counting two, aye, three, there is still only one for us? Shall we discharge our debt of reverence to this Nazarene, by signing an article of faith, stating that he is our "Lord and Master;" he who said: "Call no man good, for there is none good save the Father." Shall we petition him who said: "Of mine own self, I can do nothing?" Rather let us honor him by emulating his manliness, his rectitude of conscience, and his warmth of heart. Let our appreciation of him be expressed in efforts to become the incarnation of the Holy Spirit that he was, and that he taught all men might be. The centuries have labored long in their efforts to honor Jesus by formal creeds, by theological deification, by direct worship. To-day, men and women must seek to honor him rather by learning to will, to labor and to wait, as he did; by ripening their souls into the tenderness and reverence which were his. They must rebuke the old-time tendency to increase the fame of Jesus by defaming all others. The graces of this one are not to be disclosed by the degradation of his kin. As well might the traveler in the White mountains undertake to level Mounts Jefferson, Webster, Lafayette and Adams into the valley, tear the face of "the old man of the mountain" from its serene height and fling it as rubbish into the sleeping waters of the Winnepesaukee, that Mount Washington, the peerless, might be duly glorified. No, we must not undertake to honor Jesus by cheapening the one fact that makes Jesus's name sublime,—the sanctity of common life. Let us away with the most wicked of all skepticism, that which scoffs at the saving power of good action; that which profanely teaches that there is to come a day of judgment in which heaven-handed morality is to be as filthy rags, that which insinuates that those who are working for reason and right living are the foes of Christianity and the enemies of Jesus. Let us honor Jesus by seeking the essence rather than form, establishing character rather than creed. In his name let us make nobility of conduct the crowning glory of humanity, the pledge of immortality.

'Tis life whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death, for that we pant,
More life and fuller that we want.

JESUS' RELATION TO CHRISTIANITY AND TO OTHER GREAT RELIGIOUS TEACHERS.

In order to give this sketch as much completeness as is practical, there remain the questions: What is Jesus relation to that religious movement in history that has taken his name; and what is his relation to other great teachers of religion? Buddhism is one thing, the thought of Buddha, quite another. The teachings of Confucius and the Confucianism of to-day are not only different things but oftentimes opposite things. So Christianity, obeying this law of amplification and diversification, has become by practice and precept something very different from him it calls master. Like all great history-making forces it is not a simple but a very complex thing, like a great river to which it is so often compared. Starting in the clear spring on the mountain side, it began its career as a limpid brook; as it passed along it became stained with the soils of the valleys it fertilized, it became burdened with the drift of many hillsides, until at last we see it a great turbid tide, strong enough to float the fleets of nations,—a majestic river. But oh, the water is so muddy, burdened as it is with the filth and garbage of a hundred cities and the wash of a hundred nations. Christianity is a noble stream, proudly floating great navies of God, but only by skillful distilation can the clear, living water which flowed from that Judean spring for the refreshing of the Samaritan woman, the Galilean fisherman, the Bethany villagers, and the Magdalens of Jerusalem be obtained, so burdened is it with the mud of Romanism and the sands of Calvinism.

The same figure will help us to another truth concerning Christianity. All great rivers have not one source, but many; so this great stream of Christianity is traceable to its fountain-heads in Assyria, Persia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as well as to Nazareth-town. Putting it roughly, it may be said with truth, that Christianity found its heart in Palestine, its head in Greece, its clothes in Egypt, its hands in Rome, or to state it a little more accurately, but still subject to great modifications, much of Christian theology came from Greece *via* Alexandria; much of its sacerdotalism is Egyptian, much of its ecclesiasticism is Roman, its architecture Gothic, and the inner spirit permeating it all is from Jesus. Jesus himself wrote no creed, taught no Trinity, he framed no *scheme* of commercial atonement or sanguinary salvation with which to compromise the dignity, impeach the justice, or belie the love of the God of the universe. Jesus organized no church, and appointed no bishops, yet all these things belong to historic Christianity. All of these may have been necessary; each of them doubtless has contributed its quota to the general result, but they are not of Jesus.

Lastly, what shall we say of Jesus's relation to other great teachers? I have wholly missed my aim if I have not partly established the kinship between them all. Zoroaster, far back in the primitive days of Persia, discerned the irrepressible conflict between right and wrong, but he failed adequately to see the good in the evil, to note how much of Wrong is Right in the making; and thus the divine unity was dismembered into duality. Moses had intensity and integrity, but not breadth. Confucius had moral and practical sagacity but wanted an uplifting ideality. Buddha, it would seem, had sounded to its depths the divine gospel of renunciation; but there was something of trustfulness wanting in his soul. He missed that familiarity with the divine, that intimacy with God which is the highest prerogative of the spiritual life. Socrates placed the prime emphasis where it must ever remain when he made ethics the science of sciences and morality the wisest of all wisdom; but I miss a certain pathos in his words;

logic more than persuasion was his weapon. I can see him smile, and this is well, but I do not see him weep, and that is sad.

There is that in the character of Jesus, if I read it right, which partially rounds out these imperfections, as there is doubtless in these teachers that which would give still greater largeness to the soul of the Nazarene. He is to be measured by comparison and not by contrast. He differs from them in degree, and not in kind; to dismember him from them, his brethren in God, is to remove from us our elder brother. As they fitted into the law and necessity of their age and place, so doubtless did he fit into his age and place. His knowledge was necessarily circumscribed by the limitations of his day and land. With all his penetration and spiritual insight, we have no reason to believe that he foresaw the achievements of science or understood all the elements of character necessary to win the spiritual and moral triumphs of the western world and modern times. I am glad that the spirit of Jesus early encountered the reasoning strength and philosophic tendencies of the Alexandrian school, and the organizing, practical power of the Roman Empire. For without them the doctrine of Jesus would have died in its cradle from inherent weaknesses. Religious truths like souls must have bodies with physical needs and material forces in order to keep them in and for this world.

Whatever defects there may be in this estimate of Jesus and his place in the religious life, let no one interpret it as encouraging flippancy or indifference. He and all the attendant forces, our lives included, are parts of that Infinite stream that ever flows from the heart of God, pouring itself into the boundless ocean which human plummet cannot fathom, which human souls cannot circumnavigate,—so real, so near, so infinite that "in it we live, move and have our being." So much of this stream as can go coursing through our veins is not to be secured by begging, dreaming, or any vicariousness. Use is the only pump that draws from these exhaustless wells of God.

"Was Christ a man like us?—
Oh! let us try
If we then, too, can be such men as he!"

Our "Church-Door Pulpit" hints its purpose in its name. It aims to furnish fortnightly a transfigured tract,—transfigured by being paid for, and by representing not so much a given system of beliefs as the emphasis, in somewhat varying beliefs, on "Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion;" this tract to be taken from the rack or table at the church-door to the home, there to serve its little mission by reading in the family, lending to a neighbor, mailing to a distant friend, etc. We hope the plan may be destined to wide adoption by Liberal churches as part of their regular church-work.

The word "UNITY" in the title bears to the Committee who arrange the series a wide meaning, pointing more to the substance, than to the forms, of religious thought and faith; and in inviting contributions they have sought, not only through the whole range, but in both directions beyond the range, of those who bear the "Unitarian" name,—though most of the writers must naturally be found within that name. "New Orthodoxy," "New Judaism," those who care for no name but "Religion," and the "Ethical Societies," will all be represented. The choice of subject is left to the writers; and *each writer is responsible for his own utterance alone, and for nothing else in the series.* "One of your best—a life-helping sermon, or a thought-sermon reaching the life," was the invitation sent out.